



Parents As Learning Support (PALS)

Parent Involvement Matching Grants

Application Guidelines and Instructions

Application Deadline: September 26, 2008

City of Las Vegas
Neighborhood Services Department

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Program Guidelines

Introduction

Parents and families are vital resources in a student's academic success. Studies show that when families get involved in their children's education, grades and test scores improve. Children become more likely to meet school achievement benchmarks, and go on to pursue college. Parent participation also helps children to develop better social skills, high self-esteem, and reduce the likelihood of drugs and alcohol usage.

PALS Matching Grants are designed to make parents and school staff partners in defining and addressing the needs of their school and the children it serves. Using PALS funding, schools and parents can bring resources, training and tools to their school community to turn their schools into nurturing environments for children and families to grow and learn in the classroom and after school hours.

Teams of parents, teachers and school staff from eligible elementary schools are invited to apply for matching grants up to \$8,000. Applications will be rated based their goals and anticipated outcome, the level of parent involvement in project planning, implementation and participation, and the school's ability to sustain parent involvement after the grant cycle has concluded. Only Clark County School District Elementary Schools located in the Las Vegas city limits are eligible for funding.

Grant amounts requested must exceed or be matched, dollar-for-dollar with parent participation hours, volunteer labor and/or community donations. Participation and volunteer hours are valued at \$19 per hour. Donated supplies and materials are given market value.

Goals:

PALS Matching Grants support school based strategies that:

- Establish parents and school staff as partners in defining and addressing student needs
- Identify unengaged parents and develop strategies for involving them in school activities
- Improve student achievement
- Involve parents in a variety of functions/roles in the school
- Create a support system of families, school staff and community leaders who take responsibility for the safety and well being of all students attending their school

Requirements for receiving PALS Funding

- Grant activity planning teams must include a minimum of three (3) parents whose students currently attend the applying school.
- The number of school staff on a grant activity planning team cannot exceed the number of parents
- Parent organizations cannot discriminate in the admission of members to their association

Projects can include:

- **Parent/School Communication Projects** – projects that increase the amount of information parents receive concerning school performance and activities and/or allow school staff to communicate more effectively with the families represented in their school

- Family needs assessments - surveys to determine the needs and interests of school families and children, door-to-door assessments, mail outs, etc.
- Activities to increase communication between parents and school staff - newsletters, websites, progress reports, parent teacher meetings

- **Health and Safety Programs** – projects that increase school and family safety and promote the health and well being of children and their families

Projects can include:

- Childhood obesity prevention (nutrition) - cooking classes, training on how to read food labels, community gardens
- Childhood obesity prevention (fitness) - walking clubs, hikes and nature walks, school based exercise classes, youth sports programs
- Walking school busses - groups of children who walk to and from home to school each morning quickly and safely under the guidance of trained adult supervisors
- Fire Safety - programs teaching students the importance of fire prevention and safety at home, in school and in the community

- **Academic Reinforcement Initiatives** – projects that promote learning beyond classroom instruction

Projects can include:

- After-school activities - family reading or movie nights, student performances science and math clubs, homework clubs, educational field trips
- At-home learning projects for parents - workshops and materials to show parents how to check homework, support literacy, develop their child's oral communication skills, increase their child's proficiency in math and science

- **Parent Development and Training** – leadership and team building opportunities for school staff and parents to help them work together for school and student success.

Projects can include:

- Activities to sustain parent involvement - parent organization non-profit certification, training, idea kits/resource materials
- Conferences, workshops and retreats to discuss school curriculum, school planning and student assessments
- Personal improvement seminars and classes offering parenting skills, literacy and English as a Second Language (ESL) courses

PALS funding cannot be used for:

- Salaries and/or overtime
- Projects identified with political parties of any kind
- General contributions to capital campaigns
- Operating deficits or retirement of debt
- Endowment programs

Matching Criteria

Applicants must pledge and then secure resources to match the funds they request. Matches may include: Volunteer labor, cash donations, donated supplies, equipment, or professional services. These match elements may be blended together to make the required total match.

Volunteer Hours

- Volunteer hours from school parents are mandatory.
- To ensure parent involvement, at least 50 percent of the matching amount must be volunteer or participation hours from parents and family members whose children attend the applying school.
- Volunteer hours can represent 100 percent of the matching amount.

Pledged Business Donations and Professional Services; Donated Supplies and Equipment

- Applicants must have a **letter of intent** for each business and professional pledging time or money to the project. If checks are collected as pledges, copies of these checks must be attached to the application with its corresponding **letter of intent**.
- The value of professional services counted toward the match shall be based upon the reasonable and customary value of the service rendered.
- Borrowed equipment such as computers or trucks may be used as match. The value of the equipment is set at the amount that would have been paid to rent the equipment for the work performed.

Evaluation Committee and Criteria

A selection committee consisting of representatives from the city of Las Vegas' Neighborhood and Leisure Services, the Clark County School District and area Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) will review all applications and determine which school projects will receive funding. Projects will be rated based on:

- ♦ Goals and anticipated outcomes
- ♦ Level of parent involvement in project planning and implementation
- ♦ Opportunities for parent participation
- ♦ Proposed match
- ♦ School's ability to sustain parent involvement after the grant cycle has concluded

PALS Grant Application Instructions

Section I: School Information

Item A: Enter the contact information for the applying school.

Item B: Enter the name of your principal.

Section II: Grant Request Summary

Item A: Enter the total amount your school is requesting for PALS.

Item B: Check box stating whether or not your school received PALS funding for the 2007-2008 school year.

Section III: PALS Grant School Planning Team

Item A: Each PALS school planning team must designate a parent and a member of the school staff to serve as the school planning team leaders. The planning team leaders will serve as the primary contacts for your school's PALS activities and will approve all spending of your PALS grant funds. Enter their names and contact information.

Item B: Enter the names of all the remaining members of your school's Planning Team. (Remember, planning teams must have a minimum of three parents whose student(s) currently attend

your school, and the number of school staff serving on the planning team can not exceed the number of parents.)

Section IV: Current Parent Involvement

- Item A:** Give a brief description of your school's current level and quality of parent involvement. (Please be frank and genuine in your assessment. This information will not negatively affect your application).
- Item B:** Check the box stating whether or not your school has an active parent organization (PTA, PTO, or Parent Center, etc.). If your school does not have an active parent organization, proceed to **Item I**.
- Item C:** Enter the name of your school's parent organization. If available, attach a copy of your parent organization's bylaws or guidelines, a copy of their budget for this fiscal year, and a copy of their current treasurer's report.
- Item D:** Enter the number of active parents in your school's parent organization.
- Item E:** List the primary source of funding for your school's parent organization. (Fundraisers, community donations, grants, parent dues, etc.)
- Item F:** List how often your school's parent organization meets.
- Item G:** Describe the last project or activity your school's parent organization planned and implemented. Please include the date, reasons for the project or activity and whether or not the project or activity accomplished its intended goals.
- Item H:** Describe how the project/activity listed in Item G was funded?
- Item I:** List the five main reasons you feel more of your school's parents do not participate in school activities.

Section V: Projects

Please complete a separate copy of Section V for each of the projects your school plans to implement using PALS funding. There is a maximum limit of four projects that your school may submit. The total grant amount requested for all projects combined may not exceed \$8,000.

- Item A:** List the name of the school planning team member that will serve as the coordinator for this project and check the box stating whether they are a parent or a school staff member. Please be sure their contact information is listed in **Section III** of your PALS Grant application.
- Item B:** List the name of this project.
- Item C:** Check one box that best describes the category for your project.
- Item D:** Enter the total amount of funding needed to implement this project.
- Item E:** Enter the estimated number of participating parents.

- Item F:** Enter the total amount of donations for this project.
- Item G:** Write a detailed description of this project. Please include: proposed date(s), location(s), how many parents and school staff will be involved in the project planning implementation.
- Item H:** Check the one box that best describes how often this project will take place.
- Item I:** List five important project goals you hope will be achieved through the planning and implementation of this project.
- Item J:** Explain how this project will increase parent participation in your school.
- Item K:** Explain how your school will sustain the parental involvement once this project has been completed.

Section VI: Youth Initiative Criteria

The purpose of the youth initiative is to enhance partnerships between the city of Las Vegas, Clark County School District and community entities to develop new learning opportunities for youth and families.

- Item A:** Check the boxes accordingly to state the criteria that apply to your project.
- Item B:** Check the boxes stating whether or not your project will increase parent participation in educational activities and/or expand after-school programs for youth and families.

Section VII: Funding Project Budget

- Item A:** Please compose an itemized list of supplies that are anticipated to be purchased in order to implement this project. (Use additional sheets as necessary).
- Item B:** List the amount of volunteer hours that parents/school staff will spend planning and implementing this project. Once you have totaled the number of volunteer hours for this project, multiply that number by \$19.00 per hour and enter the total number in the box provided.
- Item C:** List the amount of parent participation hours anticipated for the duration of this project. Once you have totaled the number of parent participation hours for this project, multiply that number by \$19.00 per hour and enter the total number in the box provided.
- Item D:** List all cash donations, donated materials/supplies and professional services your school will or has received for this project. Once you have totaled the number of all donations, multiply that number by \$19.00 per hour and enter the total number in the box provided.

Note: The total amount of your funding match must equal or exceed the total amount requested from PALS. Please combine all of your match totals to find the sum of your total funding match and write the total number in the box provided.

Eligible Projects

PALS will award grants for school-based strategies that increase parent participation and student achievement.

Section VIII: Certification

List the name of the school planning team member who will be responsible for your project funds and donations. Have this person sign and date in the appropriate spaces.

Enter signatures and dates from the parent project leader, the school staff project leader, and your school principal.

Note: A letter of intent must be signed and completed by a representative from each organization that has agreed to make a donation to this project. Without a signed letter of intent, donations will not be counted towards the required grant match.